7: Thompson--367-368 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 175, 726, 728

"The fuse which set off the accumulating grievances against Siam was the suicide of the French consul at Luang-Prabang, worn out by his struggles with the Siamese. His death shocked the Chamber of Deputies into voting unanimously for action, which had also the Commercial Syndicate's backing and Pavie's documentation on which to act. The military campaign which followed in 1893 drove all the Siamese from the east bank of the Mekong, from Cambodia to Khemmaret. These operations against Siam centred around three points, but the most important was the naval demonstration at Pak Nam. A treaty was subsequently concluded on the basis of the ultimatum which called [368] for evacuation of the Mekong's left bank and indemnity for Siamese aggression. Siam found to her sorrow that too much faith had been placed in English backing and France's indifference and preoccupation with Tonkin. If in carrying out the evacuation clause Siam forced wholesale deportations of the Laotians to her territory it was the final manifestation of her drang nach Osten."

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

the greatest artistic interest. I asked the headman if it would be possible to take any, as the bonze was crumpling and smashing them vigorously with his broom. But the chief shook his head regretfully. Buddhism had degenerated in these remote provinces and was swamped with re-emergent spirit cults. These objects had been dedicated to the *phi*[1] and would have to be burnt in a ritual fire. The *phi* would also receive the burnt essence, I noticed, of a large, very obscene, and no doubt magically valuable picture.

At about this time when the bonze was treading underfoot the village's artistic output of several months, a party of Issarak or Viet-Minh, timing their action to coincide with the convoy's arrival at Moung Kassy, had set fire to the forest just south of the post. A steady breeze was blowing from that quarter, and the fire, started over a width of about a mile and fanning out as it advanced, moved slowly towards the fort.

Coming up over the river bank it took us some time to realize what was happening. There was a haze; but then there was always a haze in Laos, although by this time of day it should have been clearing and not thickening. And then we heard the crackling, punctuated with the sharp pops, which might have been distant rifle fire, but which were the explosions of thick stems of bamboo. Looking up then we saw the curtain of smoke hanging over Muong Kassy, white at the top, and black at its base and streaked occasionally by lance-points of flame, which were still two miles away.

We ran to where the car was parked, started it and tried to drive down the road towards the fire. Dupont was as pleased with it as July 14th. In about fifty yards we got tangled up with the convoy and had to leave the car on the side of the road and run on. The fire was advancing on a ragged front and was as irresistible as a volcano. Black smoke was being blown before it so that at first the flames were out of sight; but when they came through they were two hundred feet high – twice the height of the tallest tree. It went forward in zigzagging rushes; eating its way quickly through the bamboo

[1] [i.e., spirits. – Analyst]

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM 1 Indochina
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669 thickets, which went up like oil wells. A lane of fire had broken
726 right out of the general advance and its spear-point was wandering
731 up over the hill-side, already level with the fort. Large clumps of green forest were being left behind or encircled and then consumed at leisure as the fire went through the bamboo. It caught at the lianas, too, and went up a tree from top to bottom in shrivelling streamers – just like Christmas decorations catching fire. The noise of the exploding bamboos was becoming deafening and the sky was covered in a cloud through which black ash streamed up like flotsam carried on flood-waters. I noticed, though, that only the tops of some of the trees had caught on the other side of the road.

Orders were given to prepare to evacuate the fort. There was a great deal of ammunition and thousands of gallons of petrol, stored in cans, and the soldiers were swarming like ants stacking it in the road and loading the lorries. Confusion developed and matured into chaos, largely caused by the arrival of half the convoy, which blocked the road and prevented the lorries being driven out of the fort. Before an evacuation could be made the convoy had to be moved on through the village, but half the drivers couldn't be found. They had wandered off to look at the fire and taken their starting keys with them.

In the meanwhile the Laotians and Chinese rushing out of their houses with their beds and bedding, and piling their stocks of groceries between the wheels of the cars had made rapid movement impossible, even when the drivers could be rounded up. One family was actually at work taking their house down.

And then as an hour passed in struggling tumult with the convoy at last bludgeoned on through the village and safely parked on the other side, and hundreds of crates and cans loaded on to the lorries, the wind veered and the main front of the fire went by, about half a mile away. A few offshoots coming in our direction burned feebly for a while among the bamboos, and it was all over.

which we have now reached they were in full struggle against the Chams. The diversion of the king of Sukhothaï was therefore inopportune and vexing, and so King Triet-Hoàng was preparing to cross the Cordillera and have done with this new enemy when death overtook him and prevented him from carrying out his plan. "As for the king of Sukhothaï, we do not know the reason why he stopped his attacks." Cf. G. Maspero, op. cit. /Un empire colonial français: l'Indochine/, p. 110. 648* 175* 643*

Souvanna-Kham-Phong was therefore a vassal of Siam when, about 1320-1330, he drove his son Thao-Phi-Fa out of his States for having seduced one of his concubines, Nang-Ok-Khong.

FA-NGOUN (1316-1374), KING 1353-1373.

The exile, who was taken under escort on a raft as far as Khône, took refuge with the king of Cambodia who gave him a warm welcome. He brought with him his eldest son, Fa-Ngoun, who was brought up at the court of Angkor /42/ and was given the Kmer princess Nang-Yot-Kèo in marriage when he reached his majority. 643* 648* 175*

The king Paramathakhemaraja continued to endure the merciless struggle which the Thaïs of the Ménam had started against his predecessors more than a century before. After they were forced to evacuate the basin of the Ménam, and as a consequence all of western Laos, the Kmer kings were to find themselves directly threatened in their capital by the founding of Ayuthya not far from Angkor. Paramathakhemaraja therefore gave Fa-Ngoun and his father an army of ten thousand warriors to reconquer the region of Muong-Swa, hoping thereby to restore his influence there and to rely on it in the future in order to put a halt to the Siamese in Ayuthya. 643* 175* 726 648* 721

Expedition of the "ten thousand." Phi-Fa and Fa-Ngoun set forth. They overthrew the troops of the prince of Bassac who tried to bar their way and put to flight the prince of "Nam-Boun" (doubtless Cammon-Kamkeut), who was terrified at the mere rumor of their exploits, without striking a single blow. When they reached Paksane they encountered Thao-Thiem-Kham-Gno, the heir apparent of Xieng-Khouang. The latter had been condemned to death by his father because he too had /43/ seduced

643* one of his father's wives. He was now wandering about haphazardly
175* and implored their protection.
726

648* Capture of Xieng-Khouang. Fearful lest there should be an alliance
721 between Souvanna-Kham-Phong and the king of Tran-Ninh (whose reinforcements might take them from the rear in their direct march on Muong-Swa), they agreed to support the rebel. They went up the Nam-Nhiep and lay siege to Xieng-Khouang which they took by assault and whose king was put to death and replaced by Kham-Gno who acknowledged himself their vassal.

Capture of Xieng-Thong (Luang-Prabang). Reinforced by a Phoueun contingent, they then moved forward towards Xieng-Dong-Xieng-Thong. Their troops were divided into two armies, and one of these, under the command of Fa-Ngoun, entered the valley of the Nam-Khane. The other, under Phi-Fa, went down the Nam-Suong,
721 but the latter was stricken with cholera and died on the march at Hat-
643* Thoi. When he reached Dane-Khoua, Fa-Ngoun demanded that his
726 grandfather, Kham-Phong, abdicate in his favor. The latter was
175* highly indignant and moved to attack his grandson, whom he en-
648* countered at Pak-Ming. His troops were defeated and had to retreat
/762/ in disorder, /44/ his capital was captured and the old sovereign, "mad with shame and grief," hanged himself in his palace at Xieng-Thong.

726 At the age of thirty-seven Fa-Ngoun proclaimed himself king of
643* "Lan-Xang" and at once demanded submission of all the Thaï princes
175* of the Mékong. Without awaiting their "reactions" he set out to make
631 his authority accepted, and in a sort of triumphal march received the submission of all the chieftains of the northern muongs as far as the limits of the kingdoms of Xieng-Maï (Lan-Na) and Xieng-Houng (Sip-Song-Panas). He met with greater resistance in the south and had to enter into a struggle to the death against Phaya-Phao, prince of Vientiane, who had taken the leadership of the opposition.

175* The discovery by Georges Maspero in 1902, in the vicinity of the
633 present-day administrative capital of French Laos, of steles of Kmer
648* origin amidst the ruins of twenty-eight pagodas, makes it possible to
631 suppose that the first capital of the land was Say-Fong, that "dead city" stifled by the forest. In the time of its splendor it was the advanced citadel of Cambodian hegemony in Thaï territory, but its importance declined quite rapidly, doubtless with the first blows struck against the suzerainty of Angkor by the kings of Sukhothaï and

to send him a young white elephant captured by the Khas, after having promised explicitly to deliver it to him through the intermediary of Boutevong, the king of Tran-Ninh (1). But in reality 721 643* 175*

1. According to a popular tale, the history of this offering was a complete invention by Boutevong and the king of Annam had this prince's head cut off as a punishment for his lie. The son and successor of Boutevong is then supposed to have perfidiously told the Oupahat Kone-Kèo that Lê-Thanh-Tôn only wanted the claws and a few hairs from the sacred animal. Kone-Kèo sent these relics in a golden coffer, but the king of the Phoueuns replaced the claws and hairs with elephant excrement. The king of Annam was convinced that the king of Lan-Xang wished to do him a mortal wrong and sent "six immense armies" against Luang-Prabang.

the king of Annam had been making sizeable preparations for a whole year and had made sure that Tiakaphat's vassals who governed the frontier provinces would either cooperate or remain benevolent neutrals.

/66/ Siege and capture of the capital (1479). In 1479 Lê-Thanh-Tôn placed his armies under General Phoua-Khouang-Soun, who installed himself firmly in Xieng-Khouang in order to cut off all aid to Lan-Xang. Then he had his troops execute a convergent march. They crossed the various passes of the Annamitic Chain and advanced in compact masses towards Muong-Swa, which they besieged. 726 643* 175*

The Oupahat Kone-Kèo took command of the Laotian troops without delay, assisted by the generals Mun-Luong, Mun-Bouone and Mun-La. He placed a strong cover over the approaches to the capital but could not prevent the Annamite soldiers from penetrating it. Then the struggle became desperate, with the warriors of Lan-Xang defending their city house by house while "the priests prayed in the temples and the women wept in the streets" (1). Kone-Kèo

1. Ibid. (legend).

and his lieutenants were killed near the royal palace of Xieng-Thong. Their death was the signal of the rout and the old king Tiakaphat fled in haste with his family, followed by the remains

726 of his army, the survivors of which crossed the river by swimming.
643*
175*

/67/ The "restoration." -- Victory of Pak Phoun. He halted at Xieng-Khane (1). In the general confusion his second son Thène-

1. To the south of Luang-Prabang, on the right bank of the Mekong, today in Siamese territory.

Kham, a worthy descendant of Fa-Ngoun, did not lose his head. He hastily regrouped the fugitives, armed the inhabitants of the region, reformed a nearly homogeneous army as well as could be expected and, since he knew that the Annamites had been greatly weakened by a dearly bought victory, set out boldly to meet them. The Laotians fought with the strength of despair and defeated the invaders at Pak-Phoun. Exploiting this success, Thène-Kham went in hot pursuit and forced them to recross the Mékong in full disorder at the level of Pak-Nane. Lan-Xang was saved. The generalissimo Phoua-Khouang-Soun had to evacuate Tran-Ninh and died in Annamite territory--it is said that he was struck by lightning in the course of a violent storm.

But these grave events had broken the physical resistance of King Tiakaphat, who died at Xieng-Khane at the age of sixty-five, "the third day of the crescent moon of the fifth month" of year 841 (1479 A. D.) (2), leaving fourteen /68/ legitimate children of which eight

/805/

2. The Laotian year is lunar, beginning towards the middle of April. Every three years an extra month is inserted which doubles the eighth month. The numbering of the years is based on a great cycle of sixty years and on two others of ten and eight years. The Laotian era began in 638 A. D. In 1900 it entered the second year of its 22nd cycle and it was then year 1262 (Pi-Xuet-Tho-Sok). Year 841 in which King Tiakaphat died therefore corresponds to 638 + 841 = 1479 of the Christian era.

were sons and six daughters.

THÈNE-KHAM (SOUVANNA-BAN-LANG) (1445), KING 1479-1486.

727 Thène-Kham had actually held the power ever since the death
643* of his elder brother, and the situation was therefore unchanged when
176* he mounted the throne in 1479.

643* act during the opportunity presented by the disorders in Xieng-Mai,
648* which he skilfully aggravated, and decided to /78/ strike his first
175* blow against Ayuthya which he rightly considered to be the least resistant of the two kingdoms. In 1555 he rapidly descended the course of the Menam, overthrew the Siamese in an irresistible march, seized Ayuthya and returned to Burma triumphant, followed by an immense horde of captives.

Setthathirath, whose relations with Ayuthya had remained strained, made the mistake of lying quiet. He was soon able to measure all the consequences of his inaction. As soon as he returned to his capital (Ava), the Burmese king probed the sore spot of Xieng-Mai's dynastic intrigues and placed a "national" pretender, Mekou, on the throne. Setthathirath could not accept this nomination, and despite the advice of his followers who dreaded the outcome of the affair he set out in 1558 at the head of his troops to punish the usurper.

Expedition of Xieng-Khong (1558-1559).

● 726 Battle was joined along the bank of the Mekong near Hat-Soi,
643* where the Laotians defeated Mekou's soldiers and forced them to fall
648* back on their capital in disorder. But before Setthathirath had time
175* to catch up with them, Bureng-Naung entered Xieng-Mai with his Burmese. The latter sent a messenger to the king of /79/ Lan-Xang, who had halted at Xieng-Khong (1), informing him that Lan-Na was

1. On the right bank of the Mekong, opposite Houeisai.

a dependency of the Burmese State and that he proposed to entrust its government to one of his own sons. Setthathirath replied that Xieng-Mai was part of the heritage of his father Phothisarath and that he himself had been crowned in one of the pagodas of the capital. To his great surprise, Bureng-Naung seemed to give in to his reasons and invited him to come and resume possession of the kingdom which belonged to him. Scenting a trap prepared to capture his person, and not feeling sufficiently strong to battle the Burmese conqueror successfully, Setthathirath hastily embarked on the Mekong and regained Luang-Prabang (1559).

Bureng-Naung then had King Mekou crowned a second time in the capacity of vassal prince, surrounded him with advisors of his choosing and left Xieng-Mai after he had set up guard posts on the frontiers of Lan-Xang and Ayuthya.

When he returned to his States, Setthathirath endeavored to win over permanently to his cause the chieftains of Lakhone, Xieng-Khong, Xieng-Hai, /80/ Muong-Pray and Muong-Nan who had not supported Bureng-Naung, and when he was sure of their support he advanced as far as Xieng-Sen. But there he soon learned that the governor of Xieng-Hai had been taken prisoner by the Burmese and that his sister Nang-Kalay had been treacherously abducted. In spite of his anger, he judged it prudent to withdraw in the company of his allies, who left their governments in the hands of Bureng-Naung's lieutenants. 726 643* 648* 175*

Treaty of alliance with Ayuthya (1560). In order to oppose the common danger, he took the first steps towards reconciliation with the king of Ayuthya, to whom he proposed a treaty of alliance. The Siamese, who were rebuilding the ruins of their capital with courage but not without disquietude, joyfully accepted and their prince gave one of his daughters to Setthathirath. A frontier pyramid was built on the watershed between the basin of the Mekong and that of the river of Nan which flows down to the Menam. Solemnly surrounded by their courts, the two kings swore reciprocal friendship and assistance: "May the ties that bind us be prolonged from father to son down to our grandchildren and great-grandchildren; may quarrels be unknown between us and peace continue to reign /An unpaged photograph is inserted between pp. 80 and 81: "The That-Luong at Vientiane. "--Translator/ /81/ until the day when the sun and the moon fall to the surface of the earth" (1). 728 643* 648* 175*

1. Cf. Lefevre-Pontalis, La lutte des Thaïs contre les Birmans au seizieme siecle.

Vientiane, capital of Lan-Xang (1563). In order to avoid any surprise by the common enemy as well as to maintain the connection with Ayuthya, Setthathirath left Luang-Prabang permanently and transferred the capital of Lan-Xang to Vientiane. 643* 648* 175*

He was the true founder of this city which owes to him the splendor with which it shone during all of the seventeenth century and part of the eighteenth. He first surrounded it with solid bastion fortifications (2), then in the center near the river built the 633 643* 175* 172

2. From the vestiges which still remained around 1900 before the canal was dug and the circular boulevard laid out, /712/

The roof, the greater part of which still existed when Pavie 175*
went to Vientiane, has since collapsed and the two colossal statues 172
of Buddha which sit on the abandoned altar remain exposed to the 346
elements. Even as it is this grandiose ruin is wonderfully allied to 532
the natural vegetation which holds it in its grasp and one cannot, without some emotion, evoke before it the past splendor of the kingdom of Lan-Xang.

But the capital accomplishment of Setthitharath is the That-Luong, located about two kilometers away from the city. It is /341/
doubtless also the masterpiece of this Laotian architecture which has no powers of endurance but which cannot be denied grace and elegance. Miraculously spared by the Siamese at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the That-Luong was overthrown in 1873 by the Yunnanese pirates and partly restored, in rather a clumsy manner, in 1897-1898.

This pyramidal edifice, called the "plume of the world" by its founder, was the "reliquary of the kingdom" and is still a highly frequented center of pilgrimage. A stele commemorating its erection bears /85/ the date 1566, and according to legend the original 'that' was built about the eleventh century on one of Buddha's hairs.

The first enclosure, which has today crumbled away, is almost confused with the large group of ruined temples which surrounds it. It was formed by an open cloister which was colored with frescoes and in which the faithful and the priests assembled. The second enclosure is formed by a ledge along which runs a garland of bulging ornaments. "One would be tempted to call them the petals of a gigantic lotus bloom on the point of opening. Heavy pedestals covered with inscriptions support thirty-four slender pinnacles. Leaning on these pedestals as on buttresses, the mass on which the pyramid is set begins to deploy its curves and the pyramid itself springs from a sheaf of broad leaves, like the stem of a plant. . . . It once sparkled with gold applied on a lead base, shreds of which can still be seen" (1).

1. De Carne, ibid. /Voyage en Indochine et dans l'Empire chinois. Paris, 1872./, quoted by Aymonier, Voyage dans le Laos. See below, Laotian Architecture, p. 124.

First Burmese invasion (1563-1565). Solidly entrenched in his 643*
new capital, Setthathirath waited to see what the turn of events 648*
would be. /86/ He did not have long to wait, for Bureng-Naung 726
175*

643* could not tolerate the Thai alliance without giving up the prestige of
648* his victories of 1555. By 1563 he had judged that the rapid recovery of
726 the Siamese was a threat to his power, and when the rains ceased in
175* November he assembled his army, penetrated into Xieng-Mai territory, forced the king of Ayuthya to abdicate, led him away in captivity and sent his lieutenants against Lan-Xang. One of these was the Siamese prince Sang-Kao, a traitor to his country. Setthathirath put two armies into the field which took the offensive and at first gained several victories -- one at Pak-Houi where Sang-Kao was crushed and one at Muong-Kem, but they then had to fall back before the Burmese horde which swept up to the walls of Vientiane. The Burmese generals deliberated too long over the best means of capturing the city, and when they did decide to act it was too late, for Settathirath had disappeared. The capital was seized and the Oupahat (1)

1. Neither the Annals of Lan-Xang nor those of Xieng-Mai enable us to identify the Oupahat or second king who was left at Vientiane by Setthathirath. This gap is all the more surprising in that this first dignitary of the court was to reign ten years later. The Laotian chronicles indicate only that he was Setthathirath's brother-in-law, and continue to designate him by his title of Oupahat even during the period of his reign. His merit as a sovereign was, moreover, somewhat questionable, as may be seen in what follows, and it may be that the first writers of the Annals kept silent intentionally about a prince who was imposed by Burma and who was regarded by many as a usurper. All kinds of suppositions are possible. Perhaps he was one of the two younger brothers of Setthathirath who tried to accomplish the schism of 1547 and who are not once mentioned in the Annals after the unity of the kingdom was restored in 1548.

was captured together with three of the /87/ king's wives, (1) their

1. Setthathirath had allied himself by marriage with most
/595/ of the neighboring kings -- Xieng-Mai, Annam, Ayuthya. He had also married daughters of several vassals.

daughters and some twenty concubines, but after a week's rest the Burmese had to go in pursuit of the Laotian army. They caught up with it after two day's march and defeated it after a bloody combat

in the course of which Setthathirath, faithful to his tactics, succeeded in escaping once again. Since the rainy season was approaching and the Burmese were without provisions, they had to go back towards Vientiane where they expected to be able to spend the winter. But they were so harrassed all along the road by the detachments which Setthathirath sent out on their heels that they regained Burma in all haste with their prisoners (August 1565). 643* 648* 726 175*

"In sum Bureng-Naung's efforts, in spite of splendid victories, remained without /88/ any final result. There were those who criticized the king of Lan-Xang for his way of waging war, but the latter knew the defensive resources which his vast country offered, covered as it was with forests and very sparsely cultivated. By constant elusion and by harrying the enemy when they advanced too far he did what very great captains have done under similar circumstances, and it would have been a great imprudence on his part to risk the salvation of the Thai race in formal battles" (1). /723/

1. Cf. Lefevre-Pontalis, op. cit. /"La lutte des Thais contre les Birmans au seizieme siecle." Revue indochinoise, 1914, Vol. XXII, Nos. 7-8./

Campaign of 1568-1569. The king of Burma thought that if he turned his arms against Ayuthya once more he would be more successful (2). The young Siamese prince Phra-Naret sent word to

2. The former king of Ayuthya, taken prisoner by Bureng-Naung, had entered a monastery in Ava and had played his role so well that he had been allowed to go on a pilgrimage to Ayuthya. He at once threw off his frock and actively seconded his son in preparing their resistance. /557/

Setthathirath, who hastily sent him reinforcements (1568), but the Laotians fell into an ambush prepared with the assistance of a Siamese turncoat named Oya-Ram and had to return home with all speed. The Siamese had to give up their anticipated revenge, but fortunately for them the /89/ Burmese army was anxious to deal with Setthathirath and did not linger in the region of Ayuthya, but moved towards the Mekong and Vientiane by forced marches.

Second Burmese invasion (1569-1570). The Laotian army was waiting for it at the river crossing and tried in vain to prevent it

643* from crossing on a bridge of rafts. They had to fall back on the capi-
648* tal, which Bureng-Naung came in person to besiege. Setthathirath,
726 however, had not waited for his arrival before he escaped yet again,
175* and the Burmese were soon in the grip of famine and disease. It was April (1570) already, and this war without battles was assuming a tragic air at the approach of the rainy season. With rage in his heart, the conqueror of Ava decided to beat a retreat and had to count himself fortunate in being able to hang on to Lan-Na without being otherwise disturbed.

Thus Lan-Xang emerged whole from this terrible crisis, and owed its salvation to its king who had so impressed the Burmese by his tactics that the latter no longer dared show themselves on his frontiers for several years (1).

1. Cf. Lefevre-Pontalis, op. cit. /"La lutte des Thais contre les Birmans au seizieme siecle." Revue indochinoise, 1914, Vol. XXII, Nos. 7-8./

643* /90/ Campaign of Attopeu (1571). For his part, Setthathirath had
648* regained so much confidence that he went off to war in the south of
175* his States without concerning himself further over Bureng-Naung.

Ever since Fa-Ngoun his forefathers had exercised a purely nominal authority over the region of "Ong-Kham" (Attopeu, Saravane and Bassac). The Kha chieftains of these regions, whose humor was infinitely more fierce than that of their counterparts in the north, lived in what was to all practical purposes independence, and at the false news of the death of one of them Setthathirath set out to reconnoiter these remote territories. Instead of a dead man he came up against a living one who put up a determined resistance. Feeling ill, he wished to return to Vientiane, but one day he wandered a little way off from his camp and did not reappear, and disorder spread through his army (1).

1. Cf. ibid. /P. Lefevre-Pontalis, "La lutte des Thais contre les Birmans au seizième siècle." Revue indochinoise, 1914, Vol. XXII, Nos. 7-8./ G. Maspero, in his Indochine /Un empire colonial français: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930./ notes (p. 116) that the "petty king" of Vientiane, "Phya Siddha," who was extremely warlike, fell upon Cambodia unexpectedly in 1571. "Paramaraja defeated his land troops which were marching on Angkor and his fleet which was

coming down the great river, and in the following he repressed with no less vigor a new attempt on the part of this ambitious prince." We have been unable to find any confirmation of this expedition in the Laotian chronicles. 643* 648* 175*

General Sene-Soulintha took command /91/ of the troops and brought them back to the capital, where he had difficulty in explaining the king's disappearance. Since the ministers and the queen, who had just brought a son named Nokeo-Koumane into the world, affected not to believe him, he had the palace surrounded and the prime minister Tian-Ta-Simmarath, the governor of Vientiane, assassinated together with his partisans and proclaimed himself regent (1). 643* 669 175*

1. The Annals state that the chief bonzes preached conciliation and succeeded in avoiding the conflict for three months.

SENE-SOULINTHA (1511), REGENT (1571-1575).

Nothing could have been more favorable to the plans of the king of Burma than the disappearance of Setthathirath, and especially these court quarrels which he resolved to exploit without delay. To the highly questionable regent he opposed the rights to the crown of the former Oupahat, whom he had kept at Ava as a hostage since 1565. But his envoys were ignominiously massacred, "a fact which shows to what a degree people in Lan-Xang still thought they could scorn the Burmese provocations." In order to avenge this outrage Bureng-Naung sent out an expedition which was weakly /92/ led by contingents from Xieng-Mai and even from Siam, and which ended in complete failure. Then he multiplied his intrigues and worked behind discontented persons who naively imagined that with their old Oupahat there would no longer be anything to fear from Burma. 643* 648* 175* /726/

In spite of the opposition which he encountered, the regent held his power in Vientiane for four years. Sixty-one years old, he was the son of a simple village chieftain whom King Phothisarath had singled out for his intelligence and bravery. Setthathirath had employed his skill in Xieng-Mai, where he had proved his military talent against the Burmese and the pretenders to the throne of Lan-Na. Promoted to the rank of general and governor of Muong-Sai, 643* 554 175*

643* he had subsequently taken an active part in all the expeditions. In
554 the present circumstances he therefore seemed to be the man for the
175* job, but his obscure origin constituted an insurmountable obstacle to his recognition as head of the government by the immense majority of the population, who were unswervingly attached to their dynasty.

643* Third Burmese invasion (1574-1575). He tried to break the opposi-
648* tion by a reign of terror and had many rebels pitilessly executed on
175* /93/ his own authority. Then Bureng-Naung, exasperated, went on the march towards the autumn of 1574, and the Burmese army reappeared under the walls of the capital of Lan-Xang for the third time in less than a dozen years.

726 Sene-Soulintha thought that he should adopt the tactics which had
643* succeeded so well for Setthathirath, and tried to draw the enemy into
648* the forest. But the situation was no longer the same as it was in the
175* time when all the Laotians stood behind their legitimate sovereign. He took only a few partisans with him in his flight and Bureng-Naung was careful not to pursue him. The Burmese king entered the stronghold without difficulty, placed his protege on the throne, put a garrison at his disposition, consolidated the ramparts and returned tranquilly to Ava with the young Nokeo-Koumane whom he took along as a hostage. There he soon learned that the regent had fallen into the power of the Oupahat, who was sending him to him with all haste. Bureng-Naung received him with distinction and allowed him to live in complete liberty (1).

1. Cf. Lefevre-Pontalis, op. cit. /"La lutte des Thaïs contre les Birmans au seizième siècle." Revue indochinoise, 1914, Vol. XXII, Nos. 7-8./

MAHA-OUPAHAT, KING 1575-1579.

648* Lan-Xang was finally subject to the law of the /94/ Burmese con-
175* queror (1). After the Shan States, after Lan-Na and Ayutha, it
643*
/651/

1. The tribute of vassaldom was ten elephants and twelve kilograms of gold each year. (Ibid.)

succumbed in its turn because it had not been able to avoid dynastic dissensions. Nevertheless, this brilliant period of Burmese hegemony in the Indo-Chinese peninsula scarcely extended beyond the end of the sixteenth century. Bureng-Naung was to die in 1581 after a most

648* 175* Destruction of Ayuthya (1767). "The uncapturable" and splended capital, the residence of thirty-four successive kings, was taken on /153/ April 7, 1767, then burnt and completely destroyed. The old Siamese king Ekathat had fled. He was discovered in the forest in his death agony and died as he reached the Burmese camp. Mangra's generals left only a garrison of three thousand men on the spot, and returned home with more than thirty thousand captives, the whole royal family and twelve hundred cannons (1).

1. Among these prisoners was Mgr. Bigot with his Christians.

It seemed that Siam was to be wiped off the map of the earth when Phia-Tak, a resolute man who was governor of Raheng and the son of a Chinese immigrant and his Siamese wife, regrouped the remnants of the scattered forces and withdrew into the mountains of Nakhon Najok where he first put up a fierce resistance to all the Burmese attacks and then succeeded in escaping and going as far as Cambodia to recruit all the men of goodwill who were inspired by his ardor and his faith.

Founding of Bangkok by Phia-Tak (1767). When he had formed a real army by this means, he marched on the ruins of Ayuthya, exterminated the Burmese detachment in a surprise attack, caused the crown to be offered to him, and established his capital at Thanabury, which was on the right bank of the Menam level with Bangkok, around the forts /154/ which had once been built by the Frenchmen of Louis XIV. From that point he harried without respite the enemy troops occupying Siamese territory, and in less than two years succeeded in throwing the Burmese back beyond Xieng-Mai.

175* 648* 726 The Siege of Vientiane by the king of Luang-Prabang and the Burmese Aid (1771). This remarkable revival must have caused the greatest worry to the king of Vientiane, for he, like his father, had certainly cast his lot in with the invaders. In the absence of explicit documentary evidence, proof of this can be found in the appeal which he made to the Burmese when the king of Luang-Prabang attached him suddenly in 1771 and besieged him in his city. His neutrality during the hostilities had unquestionably been more than benevolent, if we consider the haste with which King Mangra immediately sent him reinforcements of five thousand men who sacked Luang-Prabang,

freed Vientiane and cut Intha-Som's troops to pieces in the plain of Muong-Kassy (1). 175* 648* 726

1. See below, "Luang-Prabang -- Inta-Shom," p. 195.

Meanwhile Phia-Tak's successes were becoming more assured. The Burmese counterattacks, always repulsed, were growing progressively weaker, and soon /155/ Siam regained enough confidence in its strength to send men into Cambodia to defend its positions against the progress of the Annamites.

In 1774 Luang-Prabang solicited its protection. The king of Vientiane was henceforth cut off from his allies, and by virtue of this fact was to find himself in an extremely delicate situation. In view of all this, we are at a loss to explain his refusal when Phia-Tak asked for the hand of one of his daughters in marriage.

The Siamese invasion and suzerainty (1778). This, at least, is the Laotian version of the dispute which arose in 1778 and which was to result in war. Certain Siamese documents also claim that Ong-Boun had Phra-Vor, one of his former ministers who had placed himself under the protection of the king of Siam through the intermediary of the governor of Bassac, assassinated in the region of Oubone (1). In either case, it was a grave imprudence and a

1. Cf. His Royal Highness Phanuphantuvongswardja, "Repression de la revolte de Vientiane," an item published in the collection The Vajiravudh Library, Bangkok, 1926.

perilous offense against a leader of armies who had been going from one victory to the next for the last ten years. The result was not long in coming, and Phia-Tak /156/ sent General Chulalok to punish the king of Vientiane.

Two large columns invaded the principality. One of them was twenty thousand men strong and came by land, and the other contained about ten thousand men and came by the Mekong. The latter, which was reinforced by a Cambodian contingent, set out from Kompong-Soai and came up the river in pirogues (1). It

1. Cf. Moura, Histoire du Cambodge.

175* easily drove back the Laotian detachments which were sent to
648* meet it and rejoined the main column in the vicinity of Vientiane
726 itself.

The siege of the city lasted four months, and when the Siamese entered the city Ong-Boun had fled with Chao-In, one of his sons (2).

2. According to Prince Damrong, Ong-Boun hid at Kham-Keut. According to His Royal Highness Phanuphanthavongswardja he took refuge in Annam. /Prince Damrong, Guerres siamo-birmanes, Bangkok, 1920. His Royal Highness Phanuphantuvongswardja, Repression de la revolte de Vientiane, Bangkok, 1926./

Chulalok took possession of the territory in the name of his sovereign, left a military occupation force, gave its administration to a governor who settled in the royal palace, and then regained
/778/ Thanabury taking Ong-Boun's children with him and carrying off the Prabang and the Prakeo.

642 Interregnum (1778-1782). Four years passed during which
175* Vientiane lived /157/ in direct dependency on the Siamese government. At Bangkok, in the meantime, Phia-Tak was attracting attention by eccentricities which soon alienated the whole court. Finally this rude warrior went insane, disorders broke loose and General Chakkri, who was on duty in Cambodia, hastily returned to bring the rebels back into obedience. He strengthened the throne to his own profit, for he mounted it under the name of Phra-Phuti-Chao-Luong (June 1, 1782) (1).

1. *This king, who is also called Rama the First, was the* founder of the present dynasty. He transferred the seat of his government from the right bank of the Menam to the left bank, where he laid the first foundations of modern Bangkok.

648* Submission of Ong-Boun. Ong-Boun gained knowledge of these
175* events in his exile. He also learned that his sons had been kindly treated by the new sovereign, and he then decided to make his submission. The king of Siam displayed clemency, gave the aged prince permission to end his days in his old capital, and gave the government of the principality to his eldest son Chao-Nan.

CHAO-NAN, KING 1782-1792.

The Siamese governor yielded his place to Chao-Nan, who re- 648*
turned to Vientiane bringing back /158/ the Prabang but not the 175*
Prakeo.

There was no incident to mark the first years of his reign (1),

1. According to Pavie's translators, Vientiane was "sacked" 000
by the Annamites in 1790. At this period, however, the Tay-Son and the Nguyen were engaged in a stubborn struggle around Saigon and Qui-Nhon, and it is therefore highly unlikely that they should have had the leisure or the opportunity to open a campaign in Laos. If there was an invasion it was probably only a local scuffle exaggerated out of all proportion by the chroniclers of Luang-Prabang. Furthermore, the latter abstain from any kind of commentary.

but in 1791 Chao-Nan was informed of the dynastic troubles which divided Luang-Prabang, which had been without a king since the death of Tiao-Vong, and could not resist a desire to profit thereby and invade the kingdom.

Expedition of Luang-Prabang (1791). He besieged the capital, 726
took it by assault (2), annexed the Houa-Phan and returned home 175*
643*

2. See below, pp. 198-200.

triumphant escorted by numerous prisoners.

Siam had followed a policy of non-intervention, but scarcely had Chao-Nan regained Vientiane when he was summoned to Bangkok, deposed and replaced by his young brother Chao-In.

CHAO-IN, KING 1792-1805.

Aided by his younger brother, the Oupahat Chao-Anou, /159/ 643*
the new king governed as a loyal and submissive tributary, and 648*
even participated in one of the last Siamese expeditions against the 175*
Burmese in the region of Xieng-Sen. In the course of these operations Chao-Anou, who was in command of the Laotian contingent, distinguished himself by his military capacity and on his return was congratulated by King Phra-Phuthi-Chao-Luong.

643* British fleet was going to threaten Bangkok (2), he suddenly cast
648*
175*

2. In fact, Captain Burney's mission was to obtain, by peaceful means, a trade treaty which would open the port of Bangkok to the British.

off his mask and declared war.

648* Opening of hostilities against Siam (1826). The pretext invoked
175* has remained rather obscure and the Siamese accounts pass over the
721 matter in silence, merely accusing Anou of ingratitude and ambition (3). According to a Laotian version, Anou /167/ had sent a

3. Cf. H.R.H. Phanuphanthuvongswardja, op. cit. /Repression de la revolte de Vientiane, Bangkok, 1926./

number of his subjects to the Bangkok government to work at building roads. The labor draft had been judged too small, his delegate had replied arrogantly to the observations of the Siamese, and when the king of Vientiane was informed of the incident he deliberately opened hostilities.

648 March on Korat and Bangkok. Whatever the case may be, the
175* first operations were unleashed with lightning-like rapidity. Three
726 armies were sent against Bangkok, one leaving from Oubone and led
● by Chao-Ngo, the second concentrated at Roi-Et and led by the Oupahat Tissa, and the third under the command of Anou himself, seconded by his sons Chao-Po and Chao-Ngao, and with Khorat as its objective.

These troops encountered but insignificant resistance (1) and

1. Anou is said to have safeguarded his rapid march by telling the population that he was hastening to the aid of the king of Siam, who was being attacked by the British. Cf. ibid.

news of the invasion had scarcely reached Bangkok when Anou, already established in Khorat, sent his advance guard to threaten Sraboury, which was three days' march from the capital.

/168/ Great was the disturbance among the Siamese, who dug trenches in all haste to protect their city. A first contingent was levied, and in a lucky sortie on "the Saturday of the fourth month of the waning moon" it succeeded in throwing the Laotian advance

guard back to Khorat. This success gave king Phra-Chao-Prasat- 648
Thong time to raise and equip a large army which he placed under 175*
the command of General Phia-Bodin. The latter advanced to- 726
wards Khorat with the greater part of his troops and was preparing to enter into battle when he learned that Anou was beating a retreat.

Failure at Samrit. Indeed, Anou had just suffered a failure in the plain of Samrit where one of his detachments escorting captives had been surprised, encircled and destroyed by a small Siamese force. Greatly impressed -- whether rightly or wrongly -- by this setback, he decided to fall back towards the north. Then Phia-Bodin organized the repression of the revolt systematically. While his lieutenants stormed the entrenched camp of Oubone and captured Chao-Ngo, who had been betrayed by his cousin Chao-Houy, in Bassac, he himself placed the various Muongs of the northeast under military occupation and prudently marched in the direction of Vientiane /169/ (sixth month of the waxing moon of the year 1827) (1).

1. Chronique siamoise, op. cit.

Battle of Nong-Boua-Lamphou (1827). Anou fell back almost to the Mekong and covered his capital with all his forces, which he massed on the right bank of the river. The Siamese army caught up with him at Nong-Boua-Lamphou where his troops were soon swamped and could not prevent Phia-Bodin from establishing himself in Thong-Sompoi and preparing to cross the Mekong. There the Laotians fought desperately and prevented the crossing for seven days, but they finally had to yield to the thrust of Phia-Bodin who was receiving new reinforcements constantly. Disaster was the result.

Flight of Anou. Demoralized, Anou waited only until the enemy had crossed the water. He fled with his family and a few followers, delivering up his city to the fury of the Siamese general who had boasted that he would destroy Vientiane from top to bottom in accordance with his king's orders.

He wandered haphazardly for several days in the impenetrable forests which covered /170/ his land. His companions were the first to recover and worked to revive his courage. They assembled

726 a few vestiges of his scattered troops and urged him to ask all his
648* neighbors for aid in order to make a supreme effort.
175* He addressed himself first to the king of Xieng-Mai, who gave him an out-and-out refusal. The king of Luang-Prabang offered him platonic consolation and a few officers whom he was never to receive. The emperor of Annam promised him an army, but without specifying any date or place of concentration. As for the king of Xieng-Khouang he preserved a prudent silence.

643* Chao-Noi, king of Xieng-Khouang. This latter, Chao-Noi, who
175* was to play a major role in the years which followed, has left the memory of a detestable prince. To be sure, he was confronted with a tragic situation and one fraught with difficulties which little by little caught him up in a close net from which he could not extricate himself, but he did nothing to force the hand of destiny and showed himself to be, if not cowardly, at least hesitant and without political sense at a time when events demanded decisiveness and courage.

He had succeeded, in 1791 at the age of twelve, his /171/ father Chao-Xieng who was a brother of Xom-Phou (1). He had soon freed

1. See above, p. 149,

/429/ himself from the guardianship of the counselor Phou-Ho-Xieng-Di whom the dignitaries of his kingdom had given him, and had at once manifested a brutal despotism towards his unhappy subjects whom he overburdened with taxes and vexations (repeated levies of first grade materials for the reconstruction of his palace, unjustified drafts of soldiers and continual abductions of children, for to expensive tastes he joined a passion for women).

/662/ Phou-Ho-Xieng-Di had dared to complain to King Anou, and the latter had summoned Chao-Noi to Vientiane, but there the clever fellow had charmed his suzerain with his talents as a horseman, by training a horse which was reputed to be unmanageable. He had returned to Xieng-Khouang laden with presents and honors and had lost no time in having his childhood mentor assassinated.

648* The results of the Siamese campaign of 1827 were not such as to
175* displease him, for hatred for Vientiane was a tradition in his family. At first he therefore turned a deaf ear to the appeals of the wandering king. In a second message, after Anou had called on him to fulfill his duties as a vassal, he announced that two thousand men were being sent, /172/ although he ordered them not to arrive "until after

727 ruins, for the city had been given over to fire and bloodshed. The
175* Siamese had deported six thousand families to the right bank of the Mekong, had taken all the elephants and removed four hundred warhorses. They had not, however, been able to lay hands on /174/ the royal treasures, which had been carefully hidden. Phia-Bodin had then left for Bangkok leaving matters in the hands of Phia-Papha and driving towards the Menam terrified throngs of men, women and children who were followed by long files of carts filled with plunder and statues taken from the overturned temples (1).

1. Including the Prabang, carried off for the second time.

645 Since Phia-Papha had only a small force at his disposal, he left
175* Vientiane, crossed the river, dispatched a messenger to his master and settled in Thabo to await the turn of events.

721 Battle of Makheng. According to a Siamese version, the Annamite
175* "commissioners" accompanying Anou interceded in his behalf and obtained his pardon. In this version, the king of Vientiane was given permission to settle in the city again, but then had all the Siamese who were there massacred by surprise, immediately sent out his troops in pursuit of Phia-Papha and was again defeated in the vicinity of Makheng (2).

2. Cf. Phanuphanthuvongswardja, op. cit. /Repression de la revolte de Vientiane, Bangkok, 1926./

726 In the meantime the king of Siam, at the news of the rebel's re-
643* turn, had sent out a new army 20,000 men strong which reached
175* /175/ the banks of the river in forced marches. Then Anou realized that struggle was impossible, and so as not to bring down further misfortunes on his subjects he resolved to go to China. He left by the valley of the Nam-Song with only one of his wives and 120 devoted partisans (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique." Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./

648* Chao-Noi delivers up Anou (1831). The Siamese general sus-
175* pected that he had made his way towards Tran-Ninh and sent orders

175* a completely disinterested vanquisher who is supposed to have renounced the throne in favor of his eldest son Sotika-Koumane. Yet this Intha-Prom is nowhere to be found either in the archives of the royal palace or the genealogies of the court families. To be sure, the Annals make no mention of the exact date of Intha-Som's death, but they agree that the crown passed to his successor Sotika-Koumane in 1776 and then to Tiao-Vong in 1781. The reign of Intha-Som is considerably lengthened thereby, but not in any improbable fashion. Whatever the case may be, this prince was still living in 1750 because his son Tiao-Vong was born in the following year.

648* Burmese invasion (1753). A more serious danger was threatening
175* Luang-Prabang. Alompra, the conqueror of the Pegouans and of Lan-Na, had begun to reconstruct Bureng-Naung's great Burmese empire, and with the support of the king of Vientiane turned his armies against /195/ the principality in 1753. His lieutenant Po-Nanor crushed Intha-Som's army, penetrated into Luang-Prabang and returned to Alompra's camp with many hostages, including the very young prince Tiao-Vong (1). The latter remained a captive

1. Cf. Chronology of Pavie's translators.

for twelve years, and profiting by disorders which broke out in 1765 on Burma's Chinese frontier he succeeded in fleeing with six hundred Laotians and returned to his own land.

At Alompra's death Intha-Som tried unsuccessfully to free himself from Burmese domination by joining his resistance efforts with those of the king of Xieng-Mai (2). He was finally delivered only

2. Cf. Prince Damrong, Guerres siamo-birmanes, 23rd war (1763-1764).

after the fall of Ayuthya by the Siamese victories of 1768 and 1769. He then resolved to seek vengeance against the king of Vientiane, made long preparations for his expedition and appeared under the walls of Ong-Boun's capital in 1771.

726 Siege of Vientiane. The city put up a valiant defense, and he
175* had to invest it and undertake a siege according to rule. Ong-Boun

had enough time to send for aid to the Burmese, who marched on 726
Luang-Prabang in the number of five thousand, captured the city 175*
a second time and descended /196/ on Vientiane by the land route. The besieging army broke camp in haste and went to meet the Burmese reinforcements by way of the long, rocky pass which then marked the frontier between the two principalities.

Battle of Muong-Kassy. A heated battle was joined in the plain of Muong-Kassy, and the struggle had been going on for two weeks when Ong-Boun reached the spot with his garrison. Caught between two fires, Intha-Som's soldiers had to capitulate.

It does not seem that this defeat had, at least immediately, the dire consequences which might have been dreaded for Luang-Prabang. The Burmese simply went home again, for they were not yet rid of the Siamese who were harassing them even as far as Xieng Mai, and when left to its own resources Vientiane was in no position to profit by its victory in order to impose its law on the vanquished.

Alliance with Siam (1774). After his fortunate escape Intha- 648*
Som hastened to make advances to the new king of Siam who had 175*
just established his capital in Bangkok. Phya-Tak received them favorably and sent out an embassy in 1774 to form /197/ an alliance with the king of Luang-Prabang against any return offensive on the part of the Burmese.

SOTIKA-KOUMANE, KING 1776-1781.

Siamese suzerainty (1778). This alliance was confirmed upon the accession to the throne of Sotika-Koumane, Intha-Som's son and successor, but in 1778 after the fictorious war waged by Siam against Vientiane the king of Luang-Prabang was forced to accept the new Siamese conditions which were equivalent to an acknowledgement of suzerainty by the principality.

Sotika-Koumane reigned for scarcely five years, for his /643/'
younger brother Tiao-Vong forced him to abdicate in his favor in 1781.

TIAO-VONG (1751), KING 1781-1787.

Tiao-Vong endeavored to keep up the old alliances with 648*
neighboring States. He particularly strengthened the excellent 175*
relations which Luang-Prabang had always had with the Sip-Song- 643*

648* Panas, and married a princess of Muong-La in 1782. In the same
175* year he sent out an embassy to take the decennial tribute to Pekin.
643* /198/ He died prematurely in 1787 without leaving any posterity.

Interregnum, 1787-1791. Tiao-Vong's brothers could not agree
648* on a successor, and for four years Luang-Prabang was without a
721 king.
175* Ong-Boun's son Chao-Nan profited by this in order to invade the principality. In the face of this danger Anourout, the second son of Thene-Kham and Intha-Som, assumed power and organized the resistance. Although the Annals make no mention thereof, he probably had to appeal to the Siamese alliance, and even if the king of Bangkok did not intervene directly he at least took action, in the common interest, against the perpetual incursions of the Burmese into his own territory. It may well be that the Siamese avoided taking any side, feeling that a new war would weaken both principalities and could only serve their own ends.

ANOUROUT, KING 1791-1817.

726 Siege and capture of Luang-Prabang by Chao-Nan, king of
175* Vientiane (1791). When besieged by the Vientiane troops Luang-Prabang /199/ put up a fierce resistance and succumbed only because of treachery on the part of Tiao-Vong's widow.

We may assume that the latter was dissatisfied over her brother-in-law's accession to the throne and gave ear to Chao-Nan's proposals regarding the family dissensions.

Popular tradition has preserved several accounts of this war which differ as regards the circumstances under which Luang-Prabang was captured. According to one version, "shots were fired from within and from without, but without meeting." The people of Vientiane finally grew short of food and made ready to raise the siege. It was then that Chao-Nan is supposed to have sent "Anourout's sister" (his sister-in-law, to be precise) a note in which he promised to marry her if she would have one of the city gates opened for him. "It depends only on you," he wrote her, "for me to be a conqueror and for you to become queen of a reconstituted Lan-Xang." Seduced by this proposal, the princess is supposed to have placed a trusted servant at the Pak-Man gate and sent word to Chao-Nan that he could enter. "She put her letter in a bamboo tube which she filled with powder, and sent her device into the enemy camp. The addressee received the epistle, got the keys within three /200/ days, took Luang-Prabang and married the princess."

Another version states, on the contrary, that there was no treason and no marriage and that the gate was merely forced during an attack. 726 175*

Whatever the case may be, Chao-Nan's troops entered the city, massacred a large number of inhabitants and took many families in captivity to Vientiane. Anourout had enough time to flee and to take refuge in Siam.

Loss of the Houa-Phan. Chao-Nan imposed his conditions on Luang-Prabang, but he did not dare to push his conquest as far as an annexation which the suzerain of the Menam would not have tolerated. He was content with annexing the cantons of the Houa-Phan and with forbidding all relations between the principality and Tran-Ninh (1). 648* 175*

1. Chao-Nan was not destined to enjoy his victory for long. We have seen elsewhere (p. 158) the fate held in store for him by Siam, which deposed him and assigned him Bangkok as his residence.

Anourout was held in Bangkok until 1793 and was liberated by the Siamese only after the intervention of the emperor of China. He rebuilt the ruins of his capital and constructed several pagodas, notably the Wat-Mai. Old and impotent, he abdicated in 1817 in favor of his /201/ son Mantha-Thourath and died two years later. 643* 175*

MANTHA-THOURATH (1775), KING 1817-1836.

Relations with Vientiane and Bangkok. Three years after his accession to the throne Mantha-Thourath received two envoys from Vientiane, Mun-Heua-Kham and Phalatsay, who proposed a secret treaty of friendship. King Anou, who was impatiently enduring his Siamese guardianship, suggested that they should forget past quarrels and unite their strength against the suzerain of the West whose power was increasing in an alarming fashion. Mantha-Thourath accepted the two racing pirogues which the two ambassadors brought him in behalf of their master, but was somewhat timorous and refused to enter into any agreement (1). The following year 648* 175* /431/

1. One of these pirogues has been preserved in the Tioun-Khong pagoda.

563 Sisania or Chao-un-Vico passed through the village streets.
175* The teller of this tale added naively that they did not like it at all." (Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique," Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./).

175* /243/ A second column was led by an incapable and cowardly
563 leader (1) and came to terms in a treacherous way with the Hos,
726

1. Phra-Phanom, a cousin of Chao-Hung who was in the pay of Siam. (Cf. ibid. /de Pelacot, "Le Tran-Ninh historique," Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./.)

who organized themselves strongly in their lair and began a systematic pillage of the surrounding territory. Then Chao-Hung asked for aid from the king of Luang-Prabang and the emperor of Annam. Tu-Duc sent twelve hundred men, while Oun-Kham sent two hundred, himself took command of 400 Phoueuns and marched resolutely on Bandon. But he committed the error of attacking in scattered order, without a unified command. The Hos sustained the siege for forty-eight hours, then became aware of the lack of unison among the allied leaders and on the third day made a sortie during which Chao-Hung was killed. His death threw his troops into disorder and marked the end of their resistance (2).

2. The Annamites regained Vinh in the number of only seven hundred (Cf. ibid. /de Pelacot, "Le Tran-Ninh historique," Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./).

Xieng-Kham and Xieng-Khouang were immediately occupied by the Red Flags and all of Tran-Ninh was invaded and devastated, most of the villages burned, and the populace requisitioned and tortured with nameless atrocities. To such an extent was this true that after a few months the pirates had /244/ brought about an absolute vacuum. Finding nothing more to pillage, they had the idea of extracting ransom money from Luang-Prabang and had already set out on their way when a "bad omen" suddenly made them turn about and directed them towards Vientiane and Nongkhay.

Siamese intervention (1872). They encountered no resistance in this depopulated region, the few inhabitants fled terrorized into the forests at the mere rumor of their approach. They entered

Anou's old capital without difficulty and fortified themselves there, 726
completing the destruction of its ruins in their search for the royal 175*
treasures (1), and from there sent rapid incursions into the present- 563

1. They tore down the central minaret of the That-Luong.

day muong of Borikhane.

The governor of Nongkhay, blackaded in his city which was 648*
thronged with fugitives, joined his cries of alarm to the appeal 726
which the king of Luang-Prabang had sent to Bangkok, and the 175*
Siamese government dispatched an army which first succeeded in 563
driving the Hos northward and then launched a flank attack on them by detaching eight hundred men and sending them to reinforce the forces which King Oun-Kham had mobilized. But the campaign which had been so forcefully begun soon softened in the face of the pirates' counterthrusts, /245/ for the latter had shut themselves into nearly impregnable fortresses. Pressed to make an end of it and to save face, the Siamese leaders came to terms with them and gave them permission to remain in the land in return for vague recognition of the suzerainty of Bangkok. As for the surviving inhabitants of the circumscriptions which had been purged of Hos, /727/ they were "severely blamed for having fled before the enemy" and driven along the Mekong with their flocks. "10,600, men, women and children departed. The exodus of these poor folk across this land of famine was a pitiful spectacle. Most of them died along the way, and a few were able to flee. Only six thousand reached Siam" (1).

1. Cf. Captain de Pelacot, op. cit. /"Le Tran-Ninh historique," Revue indochinoise, Hanoi, 1896./

Luang-Prabang had been miraculously spared, but anarchy of 579
the utmost violence was unleased at the very gates of the princi- 563
pality. The "Yellow Flags" invaded the Sip-Song-Chau-Thai, 727
whose leader Cam-Sinh had joined forces with the "Black Flags" 175*
of Ong-Liu (2), while the Meos and the Khas stirred up trouble in

2. Lun-Vinh-Phuoc, encamped at Lao-Kay.

their turn -- seemingly at first merely in self-defense against the Hos, then as a means of existence in the general confusion -- by

Departure of the Siamese troops for Bangkok (May 1887). *175
The latter had left for Bangkok five days previously with all their 648*
troops taking with them the leaders of the conquered land, the 726
hostages from the Ho bands, the eldest sons of the king and of the Oupahat, thirty young people from the royal family or who were sons of first mandarins, and several high officials.

Their precipitate withdrawal under such critical circumstances had caused a violent eruption among the populace, who credited and passed on the most alarming rumors. It was whispered that the bands' objective was the deliverance of Cam-Sinh's sons who had been treacherously carried off by the Chao-Meun, placed in chains at his order and sent to Bangkok, that a terrible revenge was to be feared from their elder brother Cam-Oun, called Deo-van-Tri by the /265/ Annamites, whose insurmountable energy was well-known and who commanded the Black Flags in the pay of his father, the great chieftain of the Black River, and that even if Deo-van-Tri was not an enemy of Luang-Prabang where he had lived during his youth (1), no one could say what extremes his wrath

1. See above, pp. 213 and 247.

against the Siamese might take, and, what was more, his soldiers were nothing but cruel and thieving Hos who had no respect for anything... These fears became more definite each day, it was soon confirmed that the bands were coming down the Nam-Ou, and uneasiness degenerated into profound anxiety in the indefensible city without a garrison, without any leaders except old men, and behind its walls which had been crumbling ever since their destruction long ago by the people of Vientiane.

Sack of Luang-Prabang by Deo-van-Tri (June 1887). Pavie offered the king his services and his advice, but the situation of the Luong-Pitsmoulep was becoming highly embarrassing and he refused them quite brutally. The inevitable then happened. On June 7 Deo-van-Tri landed at Xieng-Thong with six hundred pirates, installed his forces in the pagoda which he knew well because he had once studied there, asked for his brothers, and demanded that the /266/ royal treasure be handed over. On the 10th he grew tired of parleying without any results and abandoned the city to his men, who plundered, set fires and massacred those who could not flee... . Pavie was greatly worried at the first gunshot and sent

648* 175* 726 Keo, one of his Cambodians, for news. The latter reached the palace at the very moment when the pirates were invading it. The good servant saw the old monarch walk stumblingly towards his gilded throne so that he could die there in a worthy manner. He caught hold of him and almost forcibly dragged him to the bank, and under the fusillade which felled several of those who had followed hoisted him onto a pirogue and rejoined his master's boat at full speed. Pavie was surrounded by the stricken Kaluong, the queen brandishing a sword and fixed in a quasi-hieratic attitude and the Satou of the Wat-Mai who lay at full length, his thigh pierced by a bullet, amidst many other wounded persons who had been taken in as they passed.

"What an indescribable scene!" Pavie noted in his journal on the day after the tragedy. "The Mekong is carrying the population of a city which has been swelled, in the panic, by more than a hundred villages, all fleeing before six hundred poor guns. .

"His voice broken by emotion, the old prince took my hand, pointed to Keo and said:

"'Without him I should be dead. Thank you for sending him'" (1).

1. Mission Pavie, ibid. /"Geographie et Voyages," Vol. VI/, p. 91

Flight of the king and sojourn at Paklay (June-August 1887). In the meantime the Hos, who were mainly preoccupied with plundering, seemed to give up pursuit of the pirogues, which silently went downriver in the raging rain. It was the lamentable exodus of a whole populace abandoned to the caprices of the current and the dangerous eddies of the river. In the evening they stopped at Pak-Nan. Pavie bandaged the wounded, and rafts were hastily built by the light of a fire which suddenly sprang up and whose flames devoured the houses along the bank. On the following day they passed the Keng-Luong, the "royal rapids" which swallowed up a number of unfortunates who were riding in frail boats. On the 13th they reached Paklay, whose inhabitants were "in the woods or gone to seek asylum with the Khas in the mountains."

Pavie at once dealt with his correspondence and entrusted it to Keo, who left at post-haste for the Menam and Bangkok. When the Kaluong was "put ashore he lost his head" and thought only of setting forth again, believing at each moment that he saw the Hos appearing

on the horizon, but the king did not wish to sow /267/ panic any further in the still peaceful villages to the South and declared that he would not go any further, but would await the news which the last of the fugitives could not fail to bring. Indeed, one of his goldsmiths who was miraculously spared soon arrived and related that the bands had set out again on the 13th for Pak-Ou, leaving nothing but a dense cloud of smoke behind them. The pagodas were still intact but all the princes' houses had been plundered and destroyed and the second king had been killed (1). 175* 726 ● 648*

1. Souvanna-Phouma. See note p. 202 and p. 249.

At this news Oun-Kham heaped bitter reproaches on the Siamese, whom he accused "of having occupied his kingdom when all was well and of having abandoned it in the hour of danger." Addressing himself to the Kaluong, he finally dared to tell him his whole thoughts:

"I have had to flee almost naked I have on me the clothes given me by M. Pavie, to whom I owe the fact that I am still alive. You are the one who prevented me from hearing him as soon as he arrived. Why did I not do so, despite your bad counsels! I am placing myself in his hands and will do what he decides."

Pavie decided to wait at Paklay for the results of Keo's mission. He cared for the king, who had fallen ill after so many emotions and misfortunes, /269/ and lavished his devotion on his friend the Satou of the Wat-Mai whose leg was becoming stiff and on seventeen wounded Laotians who were the last fugitives from the massacre. Through the Satou he became acquainted with the royal manuscripts, which were found intact in the pagoda of Wat-Mai (1). Aided by 175*

1 One of the Satou's brothers brought them from Luang-Prabang on July 10 (Mission Pavie, ibid. /"Geographie et Voyages," Vol VI/, p. 126.)

his Cambodian translators Ngin and Som he learned therein the history of Lan-Xang "which was a great and long independent State, sometimes suzerain of Siam, whose vassaldom scarcely goes back more than a century." Oun-Kham slowly recovered and was filled with gratitude for his savior's inexhaustible kindness He offered, despite "his weakened memory," to complete the documentation.

"Question me," he said, "and I will answer.... Our country

149: Reinach--1 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8
Colonial

[1] [Illustration here]

CHAPTER I

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THE POLITICAL STATUS OF LAOS FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TO THE CAPTURE OF VIEN-TIANE IN 1827

At the beginning of the eighteenth century the territories situated in the basin of the Mékong River were designated by the name of Laos or Lao, and from the political point of view formed two autonomous States.

Their autonomy was much more apparent than real, and existed in fact only for the internal administration of the two kingdoms. As far as their foreign relations went, they were tributaries of the more powerful nations which surrounded them.

The kingdom of Luang-Prabang (or Lan-Xang--of the million elephants) was the northernmost of the two and bordered on Yunnan, Tonkin, Annam, Vien-Tiane (or Vieng-Chang), the Burmese States [2] (or Sib-Song-Pahn-Na) and the You-Eun States (or Lao-Xieng). It was supposed to provide China, Annam and Siam, either annually or every three years, with tribute consisting of certain valuable products and of precious metals, and called "Gold and silver flowers."

The other, or kingdom of Vien-Tiane, was the southernmost and was bordered on the north by Luang-Prabang, on the east by Annam, on the south by Cambodia and on the west by Siam. It was the tributary of Annam and Siam in the same right and under the same conditions as the first.

This state of affairs was profoundly modified in the beginning and middle of the nineteenth century by various events of capital importance.

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At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth the Thai kingdom, or Siam, had often appealed to the Laotian princes for help in repulsing Burmese invasions or repressing the insurrections of Ngiéous, Shans and You-Eûns which were frequent at this time. The princes' devotion was ill rewarded. Around 1825, in fact, when the kingdom of Vien-Tiane seemed to want to shake off Siamese suzerainty, it saw its territory invaded by Siamese armies. After two years of war the land had been dismembered, depopulated

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and stripped of its livestock and elephants, which were taken to the Ménam valley, and had been fully conquered by the Thai sovereign.

Siam then created the hereditary fief of Tiama-Sak (Bassac) in the southeast of the former kingdom and placed a cousin of the king of Vien-Tiane over it in order to reward him for his double treachery towards the king and towards his brother, the prince of Oubone, both of whom he had delivered up to the Siamese general Phiéa-Le-Bô-Dyn, vanquisher of the Laotians.

Of the former kingdom of Vien-Tiane Siam made a Siamese province bearing the name Lao-Pou-Ên and, completely ignoring Annam's rights, it had its troops occupy the basin of the Sé-Bang-Hien in the Phu of Kam-Lô, which was situated on the left bank of the Mékong.

[3] SIAM'S ENCROACHMENTS TO THE EAST
GROUNDS FOR FRENCH INTERVENTION IN THE MÉKONG BASIN
ARRANGEMENT OF MARCH 27, 1889

175 648

Siamese expansion was not limited to these conquests. Thanks to a skilful policy, it was awarded the provinces of Méiou-Prey and Tonlé-Répou, located on both banks of the Mékong, by Cambodia about 1840. Following their annexation Siam reigned as master over the whole basin of the river from the province of Outhaï-Thani-Si-Pak-Lay (Luang-Prabang) to Siemboc, that is to say, from the eighteenth to the thirteenth parallel.

But the establishment of the French in Cochinchina placed an obstacle in the way of Siamese ambitions and of any plans for conquest which they may have nurtured. Since Cambodia was the hinterland of our new possession we were led to intervene in its foreign relations and finally guarantee it a stable political situation. Here a word of praise may well be said for Admiral de La Grandière who, by his diplomatic skill and his steadfastness, was able in 1863 to impose a treaty on King Norodom which counterbalanced another Siamo-Kmer agreement of the same year and placed the kingdom of Cambodia under a French protectorate. (1)

(1) See Appendix I.

This accord was far from being satisfactory to Siam, for the introduction of a great European nation in the Far East, on the banks

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Thus the agreement of July 14, 1870, regulated fishing conditions 648
on the Great Lake [Grand Lac] (3). In 1882 it was decided to set up [206]

(3) See Appendix III.

a telegraph line between Bangkok and Prom-Penh (4). And finally, [439]

(4) See Appendix IV.

on May 23, 1883, an agreement was reached which regulated the commerce and sale of French wines and spirits in Siam (5).

(5) See Appendix V.

This fine state of affairs soon took a turn for the worse at the time of the Tonkin expedition.

The agents of Great Britain in Siam were afraid that our penetration into the valley of the Red River and into Upper Laos [5] [Illustration] [6] [Blank page] [7] would hinder British plans for commercial establishments in Yunnan and would prevent British predominance in the two Kouang. Since they were bent on preserving their influence in this region, they induced the Siamese sovereign to act first on the Chinese frontiers, where he was to bar our progress, and then in Laos with Annam as the objective, in the hope that he might create difficulties for us and perhaps succeed in concluding some form of alliance against us.

The king's pride was flattered by his foreign advisers. Feeling that he was to play the part of the sovereign of a "great nation," he abandoned his prudent reserve, no longer kept the balance equal between the rival nations, and began his adventurous course. These were his first steps towards great disappointments, and also towards territorial losses such as those resulting from the treaty of 1893 and the London convention of 1896.

Circumstances at the time, moreover, seemed to favor Siam's action and even to excuse its behavior in some measure.

The invasion of Laos by the Hos (1) enabled the sovereign of 648 175 726

(1) Chinese bandits from Yunnan.

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Siam to preserve an appearance of neutrality, and even of cordiality, towards us.

It gave him the opportunity to pose as the defender of Annam's vassals and of the subjects of his most honorable vassal the king of Luang-Prabang. When the time came King Chulahlong-Khorn would thus be able to profit skilfully, and according to the circumstances, from the advantages which he had gained in order to transform an ill-founded vassaldom over Luang-Prabang into an absolute possession and, thanks to our difficulties, to impose the law of greater might all the way to the Annamitic Chain.

[726]

The Hô invasion, which extended all the way to Nong-Khay across the Sib-Song-Chau-Thaï, the Hua-Pahn-Ha-Tang-Hoc, Tran-Ninh and Vien-Tiane, was never seriously opposed by the Siamese no matter what they may say. Their pretended action did, however, enable the king to keep Vien-Tiane and to drive the Chinese bandits out of Laotian territory.

[8] The whole affair may have created some momentary illusion, but the actual fact was that Chulahlong-Khorn's troops, except for a few rare and unimportant skirmishes, merely followed the Hôs as they returned towards Yunnan and abandoned the territories which they had invaded after they had sacked them.

Profiting by inattention on the part of France and Annam, which were occupied [Illustration here] elsewhere, and on the fallacious pretext that it was protecting the provinces which had been devastated by the Hôs and was preventing them from returning in the future, Siam covertly established itself as master in the land.

In the meantime the Chinese bandits, after leaving Vien-Tiane and Tran-Ninh, invaded the kingdom of Luang-Prabang. The latter still paid tribute to Siam, in the form of "Gold and silver flowers," yet it had remained free of direct domination and enjoyed an autonomy comparable to [Map, unpaged, inserted between pp. 8 and 9] [9] that of Vien-Tiane before its conquest, and paid an honorary bounty to China and Annam.

Still on the pretext of driving out the Hôs, the Siamese troops entered the territory of Luang-Prabang and established themselves there as in a conquered land. Their general was given the title of royal commissioner. He administered the country, recruited troops, levied [Illustration here] taxes and behaved exactly as if the country belonged to him (1885).

648 surrounded itself with official advisers from that nations.
175 In a short time, and with remarkable rapidity, it organized an army and navy which were trained and commanded by European officers. It reinforced all its detachments in Laos, levied additional troops, and after providing supplies of arms and munitions it constructed forts. In a word, it prepared for war. It announced to the people that all these steps had been taken in order to "drive out the French and extend the Thai kingdom into Annam."

726 The 1889 arrangement establishing a status quo was then violated
175 Siamese troops and commissioners advanced towards the Annamitic Chain and crossed it at several points, particularly at Hatraf and Ai-Lao, and thus reached a point only forty kilometers from Hué. In the course of their forward march various incidents occurred which obliged the French Government to abandon the reserve which it had heretofore maintained when confronted with the intrigues of the court of Bangkok. At last it made ready to act vigorously.

175 In January 1892 the greater number of the members of [14]
648 the Pavie mission had returned to France. Only three of them had remained in Laos, two in Luang-Prabang and one in Stung-Treng.
439 It was at this time that the French Syndicate of Upper Laos, which had become the French Syndicate of Laos and had doubled its capital, sent out a new six-man mission as well as a large stock of merchandise. Its purpose was to reoccupy the old trading posts in Luang-Prabang and Nong-Khay and to found new ones at Bassac, Outhène and Xieng-Hong in a line along the Mékong. Its activity would thus extend from Cambodia to Yunnan. The Syndicate's new mission was to support and strengthen the commercial interests already in existence in the Mékong basin. It also placed vigilant agents in all the posts who would be able to keep an eye on the maneuvers of the Siamese and instil confidence in the people by showing them that in spite of Siam's threats and warlike preparations we should not abandon them. The Laotians were thus conscious of our support at a time when their invaders were becoming harsher and more arrogant and were threatening to extract reprisals from them as a punishment for having placed their trust in us and solicited our protection.

In these critical circumstances the Government decided to place a consul general in Bangkok so as to render France's political action in Siam more effective. It chose M. Pavie to occupy this high post,

I fear that our agents all too often lack this genuine consciousness. (Hear! Hear!) 175 648

Once that we had decided to intervene in Indo-China, operations were begun at three different points: in the region of Ai-Lao, in Cammon and in the north of Cambodia.

Our agents remained isolated in the Mékong valley.

Those of Luang-Prabang, who had taken refuge in the buildings of the old consulate on the right bank of the Mékong, were proscribed, blockaded and besieged. Threats of death were made against all natives who should enter into contact with them or serve them in any way whatever.

Our commercial agent in Outhène was expelled by order of the viceroy of Nong-Khay, and his merchandise was first confiscated and then almost all sold by the Siamese. The agent in Bassac escaped similar treatment thanks only to the goodwill of Prince Prit-Chit, the viceroy of Oubone and a friend of France, and they were content merely to keep a close watch on him. He was guarded so closely that he could neither send nor receive correspondence or merchandise.

The instructions given out by M. de Lanessan, the Governor General of Indo-China, for the campaign which was beginning were quite clear. He directed that open battle should be avoided imsofar as possible. He said that we must seek to gain the sympathies of the inhabitants and always prefer diplomacy and peaceful means to uncertain military engagements. In order to attain this end, the Governor General recommended the use of native troops commanded by inspectors of the militia and placed under the higher authority of a few chosen residents. 648 175 726

It was in this capacity that Messrs. Luce, Dufrénil and Bastard took part in the operations.

One column, with Muong-Phin as its objective, was placed under the command of M. Dufrénil, the vice-resident in Dong-Hoi, who was assisted by M. Garnier, an inspector of militia. Following the instructions [21] of the Governor General, that is to say without entering open combat, this force reached Muong-Phin after a rapid march, which it entered on May 14, 1893. On the 26th of the same month it reached the Mékong opposite Kemmarat.

In these parts there was a veritable rout of the Siamese, who

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were reduced to circulating rumors of the imminent arrival of sizeable reinforcements which would come and reoccupy the regions out of which we were driving them.

In the meantime another column, commanded by Inspector Grosgurin and under the general direction of M. Luce, the resident in Nghé-An, was operating in the region of Cammon.

Greater difficulties confronted us there. The region had been organized (1) by the Siamese commissioner Phrayot. The latter

(1) In accordance with the treaty of March 27, 1889.

joined with the two neighboring commissioners of Nong-Khay and Outhène, and with their help was able to surround M. Grosgurin in Keng-Kiet, which was the last step of the French column before the Mékong. The small force was massacred by the Siamese and its leader, who was stricken with fever and helpless, was killed point-blank without being able to defend himself (June).

After this ambush M. Luce, who could not obtain the reinforcements which he requested and who was also suffering from violent accesses of fever, returned to Saigon and left his command in the hands of Inspector Soler. The latter was valiantly seconded by Chief Guardsman Huguet, and completely routed the Laotians in an engagement at Na-Khat.

Phrayot, whose authority had been greatly shaken by this setback, fell back to the right bank of the Mékong and was unfortunately able to take a large part of the left bank's population with him.

Another series of operations was in course in the north of Cambodia, under the direction of M. Bastard, vice-resident in Cambodia.

In a rapid march a company of Annamite riflemen under the command of Captain Thoreux occupied Stung-Treng (April 1) and then Khône (April 5), which the Siamese commissioner and small garrison abandoned in haste.

[22] M. Bastard then returned to Saigon to give an account of the results of his mission. Captain Thoreux left a detachment on the island of Khône and returned almost alone in the direction of Stung-Treng, where he was to set up a supply service. As he was moving along the right bank of the river he was taken prisoner by a small Siamese force. He was led away to Oubone, where Prince Prit-Chit, who was, as we have seen, quite favorably disposed towards the

French, did not make his captivity too hard for him.

Reinforcements arrived from Oubone, and in May the Siamese tried to retake Khône. Their plan failed, thanks to two companies brought in by Captain Adam de Villiers. The blockade of the island was lifted and the month of July was spent in capturing the whole group of islands, particularly Dom-Som which had been fortified.

When confronted with these simultaneous actions the Siamese became greatly alarmed. It was to be feared in Bangkok that the populace, which was hostile to our influence and might also be aroused by certain court officials, might extract reprisals from the Europeans who lived in the capital. Under these circumstances, and perhaps also so as to take advantage of an unsettled situation, Britain resolved to reinforce its forces in Bangkok.

It was the assassination of Inspector Grosgurin which obliged us, despite our peaceful intentions, to enter into open warfare with Siam. This ambush indeed called for immediate reparations.

Up to that point the chancelleries had not intervened and the operations had taken place, so to speak, without the diplomats' knowledge. The Keng-Kiet incident precipitated the course of events.

M. Le Myre de Vilers, who was returning to Cochinchina, was sent to ask the Court of Bangkok for an explanation, and Admiral Humann, the commander-in-chief of the Far Eastern Squadron, received orders to sail to the Gulf of Siam.

On July 12 the Inconstant and the Comète, preceded by the steamship J.-B. Say of the Cochinchinese River Merchant Fleet which was making its regular voyage, advanced towards the bar of the Ménam. As it was about to cross the pass of Pak-Nam in accordance with the rules [23] [Illustration] [24] [Blank page] [Unpaged map inserted between pp. 24 and 25] [25] of the port of Bangkok (Article 15 of the treaty of August 15, 1856 (1)), the J.-B. Say was

(1) See Appendix IX.

shot at and sunk, for a projectile hit a vital spot. In the face of such cowardly aggression Admiral Humann was forced to respond. The two gunboats crossed the bar and, passing under the fire of the Siamese batteries of Pak-Nam and Phra-Chula, went up the Ménam to Bangkok where they cast anchor that same evening.

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726 "Our seamen," as M. Flourens put it, "had cut their way through the barrages, the torpedos and the obstacles of all kinds which the Siamese Government had laid out in order to shield, behind a barrier which it believed insurmountable, the brazen despicableness of its incessant provocations."

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728 The news aroused indignation as soon as it became known in France, and in its session of July 18 the Chamber authorized the Foreign Minister to deliver the following ultimatum to the Siamese Government:

648 1. Recognition of French rights to the left bank of the Mékong and to its islands.

2. Evacuation of the Siamese outposts established on the left bank of the Mékong, within the space of one month.

3. Satisfaction for the aggressions committed.

4. Punishment of the guilty.

5. An indemnity of two millions for damages caused.

6. Deposit of the sum of three millions as security, or payment of the tax revenues from the provinces of Battambang and Siem-Reap (2).

(2) See Appendix IXa.

Siam refused at first to accept these conditions, and on July 22 offered to cede the left bank as far as the 18th parallel, thus wishing to keep Vien-Tiane, Luang-Prabang, Tran-Ninh, the Hua-Pahn, Muong-Poukha, Xieng-Khong, Muong-Sing, the two Muong-Hou and the Pahn-Na on the left bank. It was counting, and with some reason, on the support of Great Britain.

Lord Roseberry and Ed. Grey tried, but in vain, to arouse [26] opinion in London and to provoke diplomatic intervention. The Foreign Office refused categorically. Discouraged by this sudden abandonment and intimidated by the resolute attitude of the French Government (1), the king of Siam accepted the conditions which had

(1) In accordance with the Department's instructions, M. Pavie had struck his flag and left Bangkok on July 26 aboard the Inconstant.

been offered without further ado. M. Le Myre de Vilers was named Ambassador Extraordinary and arrived to conclude a treaty with the Court of Siam which should be based on the ultimatum. Signed on

Kha

563 their prisoners among the Djarais. This state of affairs cannot go on
567 [106] indefinitely, and after settling the question of the Djarais which is more urgent, it will be necessary for Annam and Laos to pacify these tribes by a common agreement.

563 4. Rognao, Bahnar, Goelar and Habau Khas. These tribes, over
797 whom the missionaries exercise moral authority and many of whose villages are Catholic, can be regarded as pacified even though they do not pay any tribute. I have previously explained why it would not be politic, in my opinion, to require tribute in this region as of the present time.

These tribes, which are entirely located in Laotian territory, are quite tranquil but in continual dread of undertakings by their Djarai neighbors.

563 5. The great Djarai tribe, which is by far the most important and most numerous in the estimation of the missionaries. It is said to include nearly 150,000 inhabitants and is the finest racial type which I have seen in all the Kha region.

Many villages are subject to our authority and pay the head tax. Others, such as those which I found in the valley of the Fzi and on the Sesane, obey our orders, keep the roads in repair, receive traders and travelers with perfect hospitality and will pay tribute whenever we wish.

563 But there are two groups which are absolutely rebellious to our
[619] penetration. These are: 1) the groups of villages of Pley-Qho and
[643] Pley-Denang immediately south of the mission; and 2), somewhat further to the south, the group of the Sadetes whose two chieftains, the kings of water and fire, inhabit the points which are marked on
579 the map as Pa-Tao-Ia and Pa-Tao-Ngo.

563 The first of these groups has continuously committed hostile
668 acts against us. They are the ones who attacked the convoy of M.
726 Navelle when this official came to visit the mission, who have constantly attacked convoys on the road from Ang-Ke to Kon-Toum, who more recently robbed a Laotian hunter of merchandise valued at more than 1,000 piasters and pierced him with sword thrusts, and, finally, who attacked M. Lacouture and killed one of his guides. These villages are dreaded by all their neighbors. It was they against whom Meyréna (1) marched, but his success was not sufficiently

(1) Since I have been led to pronounce the name of the man who dreamed of creating a Cedang kingdom, I should say a few words regarding this adventure which seems to me to have been greatly exaggerated.

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I shall not dwell on all the personalities implicated in the matter, for I have neither the right nor the means to define the responsibilities incurred, but shall simply say that his authority has never been recognized by the Khas in any effective fashion. In a gathering held in the common house of Kon-Hoirin and at which the representatives of some twenty Cedang villages were present, he appeared in the guise of one who had come to lead them in their defense against attacks by their neighbors and to command them against the enemy Djarais (the tribes of Pley-Qho and Pley-Denang, to be exact). His proposal was naturally accepted, and was also given sanction by some semblance of an expedition against the Djarais. When the Cedangs did not take all the booty and especially all the prisoners that they had anticipated, they broke off relations with Meyréna. What is more, when Father Vialleton, the director of the Catholic mission of the Bahnars and a man of extremely subtle mind, subsequently realized what the situation was, he did not want to enter into open conflict with Meyréna but was content to set up a confederation of the Bahnar, Rognao and Goelar tribes, a confederation which had the Kha chieftain of the village of Kon-Toum at its head, but which was under the moral and actual leadership of Father Vialleton. This master stroke, the only purpose of which had been to prevent Meyréna's authority from prevailing over these tribes, dealt the death blow to the kingdom of which he had dreamed and he was obliged to leave the country.

Such, in all its simplicity, is the truth of this adventure when disengaged from all the little incidents of a more or less humorous nature which occurred at the time.

followed up. It is [107] now necessary that this den of bandits should disappear or surrender. The hatred which they have aroused against themselves is so great that during my inspection tour all the neighboring tribes, including the Cedangs, asked permission to join forces with me and march against them immediately. I had to promise that satisfaction would be given them.

When this group has disappeared or surrendered, all the hesitant factions of Djarais, Salangs and Halangs-Doang will make their submission once and for all.

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As for the second group, that of the Sadetes, the question is a ticklish one. The two Sadete kings are unquestionably the religious leaders of all the Kha tribes south of the Cedangs. According to the

traditions and the annals which I have been able to consult, they are the descendants of the last kings of the land before the Cham invasion. The kings of Cambodia have had to appeal to them for help on one or two critical occasions, and it was in return for services rendered that the king of Cambodia, up until recent times, used to send them presents every year (annual tribute, according to them, payment of which stopped only five years ago).

They have never been willing to recognize our authority. The king of Pa-Tao-la, who is situated on the Laotian side, twice attacked the Government Commissioners of Stung-Treng when the latter were making a tour of inspection in this region, first in December 1894 and a second time in January 1897. They were given a severe lesson this second time, for the village was entirely destroyed and they suffered many losses. The Sadete Loum (the Master of water) settled on the Annamite side alongside the Master of fire after the affair, and since that time has given no further orders to our faithful Djarais.

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APPENDIX XIX
NOTE ON THE MEOS

The Meo has a savage and distrustful character. He does not like the presence of foreigners, or even of people of his own race. Clinging to the side of a mountain, and always as high up as possible, he asks only to be allowed to live in peace in his wild solitude and bodes no ill to anyone provided he is left alone and independe

He is a great hunter of wild beasts and large game. More industrious than the Thais, he makes all his farming implements himself (picks and shovels), as well as his wooden buckets and mills for grinding maize and paddy. He raises fine poultry, pigs, oxen, goats and horses with particular care and success. If he stays in one place for any length of time he also produces, in addition to the maize and rice which form the basis of his food supply and the opium which he smokes, very fine eggplants, gourds, sweet potatoes and non-sweetened batatas very much like the common potato, sorrel, green beans and all the French vegetables whose seeds are given him. On his heights he cultivates the fruit trees which merely vegetate in the plains, such as the peach tree, and the peaches which he harvests can compete without any fear with those of our own country.

The Meo climbs like a cat. Over sheer paths, up ladders composed of a single bamboo pole standing upright in which notches are cut at regular intervals which are large enough for two toes, the Meo

567 upbringing and sentiments rejected the idea of such slavery, and
177 without giving in gracefully, for some of them stood to lose large capital investments, they accepted without question the principle of emancipation of slaves by capture. A few attempted to use subterfuge and tried to pass off slaves who were really slaves by capture as [675] slaves for debt. Fortunately every contract among the Laotian people, whatever it be, is a written one, and examination of these contracts was sufficient to foil all their ruses.

At the present time it may be said that this question has been solved. There are no longer any but voluntary slaves who like their life under their masters and, although free, want to stay there. Nearly all of them, moreover, are provided with a certification of liberation which their masters have forced them to request so that they, the masters, will not be accused later of keeping slaves by force.

Full justice must be given to the Laotian authorities who, although the first to suffer from this measure, have freely aided us in our task.

The reports by the government commissioners have noted the [126] good consequences of the measure. One of its first results was to bring a stop to the inter-tribal warfare among the Khas, warfare whose origin, if not its sole purpose, almost always lay in the capture of human cattle demanded by recognized slave traders [158] who were established in the land--they were mainly Burmese--and who had deliveries to make.

567 As regards slaves for debt, the question is a much more delicate one, for here we are confronted by a voluntary and for the most part uninteresting form of slavery.

In Laos, all crimes and misdemeanors must be paid for. This is the origin of nearly all debts, among the well-to-do as well as among the poorer classes. Among the latter, sentences for stealing buffalo or rice are usually involved, and among the well-to-do sentences for adultery or judicial decisions resulting from unsuccessful speculations. When sentence has been pronounced, money must be found immediately in order to avoid prison. If the borrower can offer security for payment the necessary sum is lent to him at annual interest rates which vary, depending on the province, from ten to twenty percent.

If the borrower is a poor man, he offers his person in payment of the interest and then becomes not the slave, but the servant in a house.

His status is not comparable to that of a slave by capture. Whereas the latter is a veritable beast of burden, often badly mistreated, obliged to work only for his master and to provide himself for his food and clothing, the slave for debts, on the other hand, is fed and